

International Education: Using the Newspaper to Focus on Current Events

This lesson is designed to provide an opportunity to enhance instruction in the social studies through the utilization of newspaper articles as a means of (1) exposing students to world current events, (2) establishing relevancy for class content, (3) providing a springboard for a specific concept within a particular curriculum, and maintaining an adherence to the Idaho Content Standards and grade level or course-specific learning objectives.

Responsible civic engagement depends upon an informed citizenry. Incorporating newspapers in the social studies classroom can offer students information that is difficult to obtain from traditional sources. If newspapers become a frequent component in classroom activity, a likely outcome will be citizens who develop a life-long interest in the news and an obligation to follow it.

The suggested activities are based on articles about China although articles from any other country or region could be selected depending upon the needs of a particular curriculum and area of study. These suggestions can easily be adapted to various grade levels, ability levels and learning styles.

Time allotment will vary according to individual teacher use.

I. Content:

I want my students to understand (or be able to):

- A. Examine current world events through the use of newspaper articles, political cartoons and news photos
- B. Analyze news articles as a means of expanding global understanding
- C. Connect the relevance of current world events with curriculum content
- D. Develop a life-long motivation for following the news

II. Prerequisites:

In order to fully appreciate this lesson, the student must know (or be experienced in):

- A. Summarizing and paraphrasing printed material
- B. The process of inference. (What can I infer from this article?)
- C. Cause and effect relationships between peoples, nations, and events
- D. The background of the particular country or region about which the article has been written in terms of geography, culture, government, history, economics, etc.
- E. Accessing newspaper articles through the Internet

III. Instructional Objectives:

The student will:

- A. Locate, collect, read and summarize news articles for assigned classroom

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activities and projects.

- B. Analyze articles, political cartoons, and news photos through inference, cause and effect relationship, and point of view.
- C. Actively engage in newspaper use in the classroom on a regular basis to aid in establishing a pattern of life-long interest, concern, and understanding.

IV. Materials and Equipment:

Teacher: Computer Lab
Access to newspapers - print or online (Particular articles could be reproduced for use as a classroom set depending upon availability.)
World map
Teacher Handout #1: Article #1 – Idaho Statesman 2005
Teacher Handout #2: Article #2 – China Daily August 2004
Teacher Handout #3: Article #3 – Idaho Statesman May 4, 2006
Teacher Handout #4: Political Cartoon #4 – Idaho Statesman April 28, 2006
Teacher Handout #5: Photo #5 – Idaho Statesman 2005
Teacher Handout #6: Online news sources

Student: Computer Lab
Access to newspapers - print or online (Particular articles could be reproduced for use as a classroom set depending upon availability.)

V. Instructional Procedures:

- A. If students have had limited exposure to using newspapers in the classroom, begin by locating an article that has high interest, is relevant to the topic at hand and suitable for the age and/or ability level of the class. Beforehand, determine what specific sentences you will read aloud to them - the entire article may lose them unless it is quite brief - summarize and encourage students to engage in a brief discussion. For example, if the area study is China, one such article might be the attached **ARTICLE #1 (Teacher Handout #1)**. Follow-up discussion could be stimulated through questions such as:
 - 1. What is the current world population? (approximately 6.5 billion)
 - 2. China has what fraction of the world's population? (about 1/5)
 - 3. What is the current U.S. population? (approximately 300 million)
 - 4. What reasons does the Chinese government give for justifying the one-child policy?

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5. What is your opinion of the policy?
- B. If global newspapers are accessible, an article such as the attached **ARTICLE # 2 (Teacher Handout #2)** from the *China Daily* could provide a more in-depth analysis of point of view. Questions for follow-up discussion might include:
1. What is the purpose of this article?
 2. What does this article lead you to believe?
 3. Is this an example of propaganda? (the promotion of particular ideas or doctrines to further a cause)
 4. Do you think an article such as this about American students would appear in the *Idaho Statesman* or the *New York Times*?
- C. Articles can also be springboards for specific lessons within the curriculum, such as a lesson on 20th Century Chinese history. The first two paragraphs of attached **ARTICLE #3 (Teacher Handout #3)** could be read together as a class. Then ask:
1. Where is Taiwan? (Locate on a world map.)
 2. How does China regard Taiwan?
 3. How does the Taiwanese president view Taiwan's future with China?
- At this point, the history of China from the overthrow of the last dynasty (1911) through the Chinese civil war and Communist takeover (1949) could be covered through textbook reading or student research and reporting. Introduction via a current news article will make the background information more relevant when students recognize the causes of the China/Taiwan split and its effects, as well as our own country's present-day involvement in the situation.
- D. If news articles are used in a classroom with frequency and relevancy, students will begin bringing articles on their own which they have located. Taking a few minutes to share them with the rest of the class will further encourage students to follow the news. Some suggestions:
1. Require students to provide the name of the news source and date.
 2. Read the article prior to sharing it with the class. (This may necessitate holding it until later in the period or the next day.)
 3. After determining its suitability, occasionally offer the student the opportunity to present his/her news contribution orally to the class.
- E. Political cartoons can also serve as valuable learning vehicles. To introduce students to political cartoons, again choose one with a topic consistent with the subject of the lesson. Either make individual copies or a transparency and have students interpret the message. Initially, it may be necessary to discuss two main elements of political cartoons - the concepts of **satire** (use of

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ridicule or sarcasm to expose faults, defects, abuses, etc.) and **caricature** (exaggerated drawing for satirical effect.) Though humorous, the message is intended to be serious. Refer to the attached **POLITICAL CARTOON #4 (Teacher Handout #4)**. To facilitate discussion, have students analyze the cartoon by presenting various questions such as:

1. What is the issue?
2. Who are the characters?
3. What is the creator's point of view?

Depending upon the lesson (e.g. Chinese history) and the time allotment, this activity could be further expanded through student research into areas such as these:

1. How long is the Great Wall of China?
 2. When was it built?
 3. Whom did it attempt to keep out?
 4. What was the cost to China in terms of resources and human lives?
 5. How effective was it?
- F. Consider newspaper photos for the anticipatory set of a lesson or for the closure. Many students are visual learners and photos are an effective communication tool. The attached **PHOTO #5 (Teacher Handout #5)** could be used in connection with a lesson on 20th Century Chinese history or in a government class studying human rights abuses or overall US/China relations.
- G. As an extension to any ongoing news event which the students have been following, select a short television news segment on the specific topic for classroom viewing. This two or three minute activity will lend further interest and involvement as well as reach the more visual learners.
- H. The closure for any news article activity should include a summarization of the event with emphasis on the relevancy for our country as well as for the international community.

VI Assessment/Evaluation:

Although it is recommended that news articles become an ongoing component of classroom instruction and activity, once students become familiar with their uses, an independent project should be assigned to determine proficiency. A **news notebook**, with many possibilities for adaptation, is one such assignment.

- A. Students will collect five news articles pertaining to a specific country being studied (e.g. China) or a specific region (e.g. East Asia.). Included within these five could be one political cartoon. A newspaper photo could also be added as a requirement or for extra credit.
- The project could be made more content specific by requiring that one article refer to politics, one to economics, one to culture (health care, education,

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- sports or other leisure activities, etc.)
- B. Each article will be mounted on a separate sheet of paper and will include the name and date of the news source.
 - C. A brief (5-10 sentence) summary of each will be required and written or typed on the sheet along with the article. (Explain that copying sentences directly from the article is **not** a summarization.) The summary must reflect understanding of the content.
 - D. The project will be compiled into a notebook with a cover design that expresses an artistic interpretation of the assignment.
 - E. A period of several weeks should be allowed for completion to provide adequate opportunity to collect articles (depending upon topic and availability of sources.)

VII. Idaho Achievement Standards:

Any news article used will satisfy one or more Idaho Learning Objectives. The number will depend upon topic, length of article, and depth to which it is pursued. An example is given for attached **ARTICLE #1 (Teacher Handout #1)**.

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|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6-9 GEH. 1.8.6. | Examine multiple points of view by analyzing a current event relating to Africa or Asia. |
| 6-9 GEH. 2.3.1. | Identify the names and locations of countries and major cities in the Eastern Hemisphere. |
| 6-9 GEH. 2.5.2. | Analyze and give examples of the consequences of human impact on the physical environment and evaluate ways in which technology influences human capacity to modify the physical environment. |
| 6-9 GEH. 3.2.3. | Analyze current economic issues in the countries of the Eastern Hemisphere using a variety of informational sources. |
| 6-9 GEH. 4.5.1. | Identify the major forms of government in the Eastern Hemisphere and compare them with the United States. |
| 6-9 GEH. 5.1.1. | Discuss how social institutions, including the family, religion, and education, influence behavior in different societies in the Eastern Hemisphere. |
| 6-9 GEH. 5.1.6. | Give examples of the causes and consequences of global issues, such as the expansion of global markets, the urbanization of the developing world, the consumption of natural resources, and the extinction of species, and speculate possible responses by various individuals, groups, and nations. |

ARTICLE #1
Idaho Statesman
2005

China greets newborn as 1.3 billionth citizen in campaign to push birth limits

By Alexa Olesen
The Associated Press

BEIJING — Greeted by national television coverage of his first bath, a boy born Thursday was declared China's 1.3 billionth citizen in a blaze of publicity to promote the government's controversial "one child" birth limits.

The eight-pound infant was presented with a certificate of his status following his birth at 12:02 a.m. at Beijing Maternity Hospital. State TV's evening news showed his mother, Lan Hui, a 31-year-old employee of Shell China, receiving a bouquet of flowers and the newborn getting a bath and a massage.

"I am the happiest guy in the world, and my boy will be blessed all his life," the father, Zhang Tong, 37, who works for Air China, told the official Xinhua news agency.

Xinhua didn't say whether the parents had picked a name for the baby, who became the star of a campaign touting what the communist government says are the successes of its decades-old policy limiting most urban couples to

one child.

"The family planning policy of the past 30 years has effectively controlled the over-rapid increase of China's population," the official China Daily newspaper said.

The government says that without the policy, China would have at least 200 million more mouths to feed, straining farm, water and other resources. But critics say the plan has led to forced abortions and other abuses.

Foreign experts say China's true population could be hundreds of millions above 1.3 billion because many rural families have unreported children.

The one-child limit is also frequently ignored by urban couples who can afford the fines or are desperate for a son to carry on the family name and care for them in old age.

Couples who have unsanctioned children can face heavy fines, the loss of jobs and forced sterilization. But government spokesmen deny that women are coerced into having abortions, saying forced abortions aren't sanctioned and of-

ficials who carry them out can be punished.

The U.S. government is among those who say forced abortions occur, and it has withheld money from the U.N. Population Fund the past three years because the agency supports the Beijing regime's family planning program.

China says the birth limits have reduced the number of children per couple from about 5.8 children in the 1970s to 1.8 children now.

That success has brought "a string of demographic challenges," Xinhua said in a separate report Thursday.

Fewer children will result in a smaller pool of young workers to support a large population of retirees, it said. And there is a widening gap between the numbers of boys and girls, leading to fears of social strains as millions of men in coming years are unable to find wives.

Government figures say 119 boys are born in China for every 100 girls, a gap blamed largely on parents aborting female fetuses so they can try again for a boy.

ARTICLE #2

China Daily

August 2004

**Skimpy clothing
does children harm**

While more and more children tend to be dressed in a more fashionable and sexy way, local experts warned this might bring them problems, reports Shanghai Evening Post.

A girl dressed in a spaghetti strap dress was seen to lose a ball bouncing game in a children's centre for having been pulling at her blouse all the time.

A saleswoman from a local shopping mall said that fashionable children's clothing has always been a hot seller.

But Zheng Zhizhong, a doctor from Huashan Hospital said that too much exposure could hurt their skin as children under 8 are not supposed to use sun block.

ARTICLE #3
Idaho Statesman
May 4, 2006

Washington snubs Taiwan president

BY TIM JOHNSON
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

BEIJING — Taiwan's president was forced Wednesday to delay a trip to Latin America for a day after Washington snubbed his request for a stopover in New York or San Francisco.

China claims the affluent and democratically governed island of Taiwan as part of its territory. The Chinese government makes no secret of its dislike for Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian because his support for the island's continued separation from China.

Chen surprised U.S. officials in March when he scrapped the National Unification Council, an inactive body in Taiwan that was founded to guide reunification with China. Chen's move enraged China's communist government, which holds that the island eventually must reunite with the mainland.

"The National Unification Council business was the primary reason for this" stopover dispute, said Alexander Huang, an international relations expert at Taiwan's Tamkang University. Huang said the Bush administration also is wary of offending China, which holds veto power on the U.N. Security Council, as it confronts Iran over its nuclear program.

Taiwan asked the Bush administration on April 21 for permission for a stopover. Such transit requests have been granted routinely for more than a decade, giving Chen and past Taiwanese leaders a chance to visit Los Angeles, New York, Miami, San Francisco and other major cities.

Chen delayed his scheduled departure to Thursday as Taiwanese and U.S. negotiators haggled over Taipei's demand that he be allowed to visit New York or San Francisco for an overnight stay.

Instead, Chen and his delegation were permitted only a two-hour refueling stopover in Anchorage, Alaska, on their way to Paraguay and Costa Rica.

POLITICAL CARTOON #4
Idaho Statesman
April 28, 2006

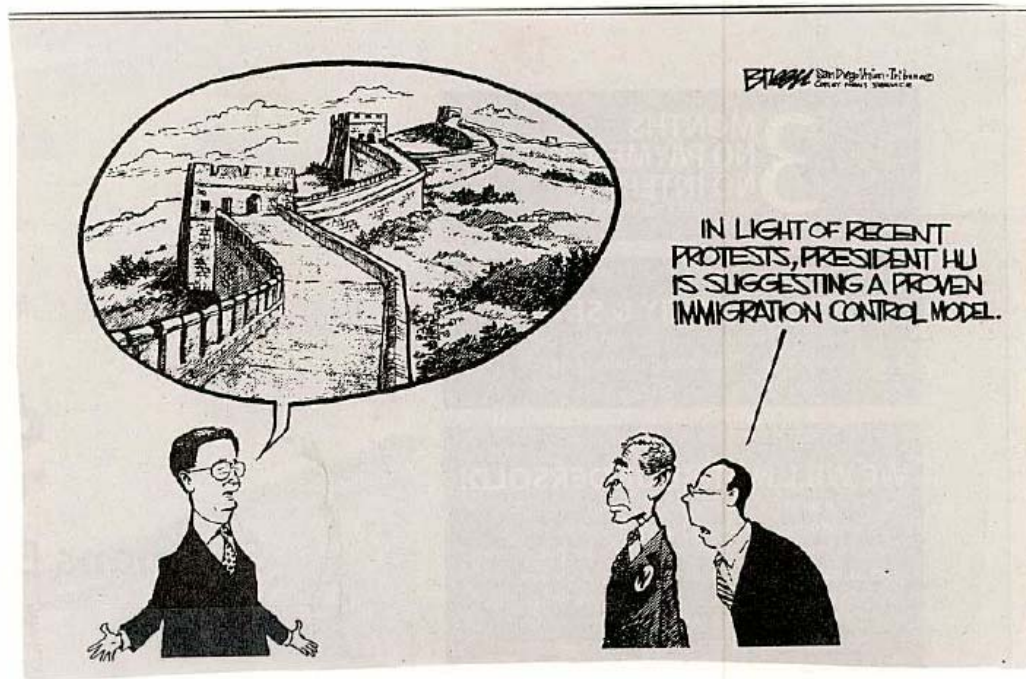
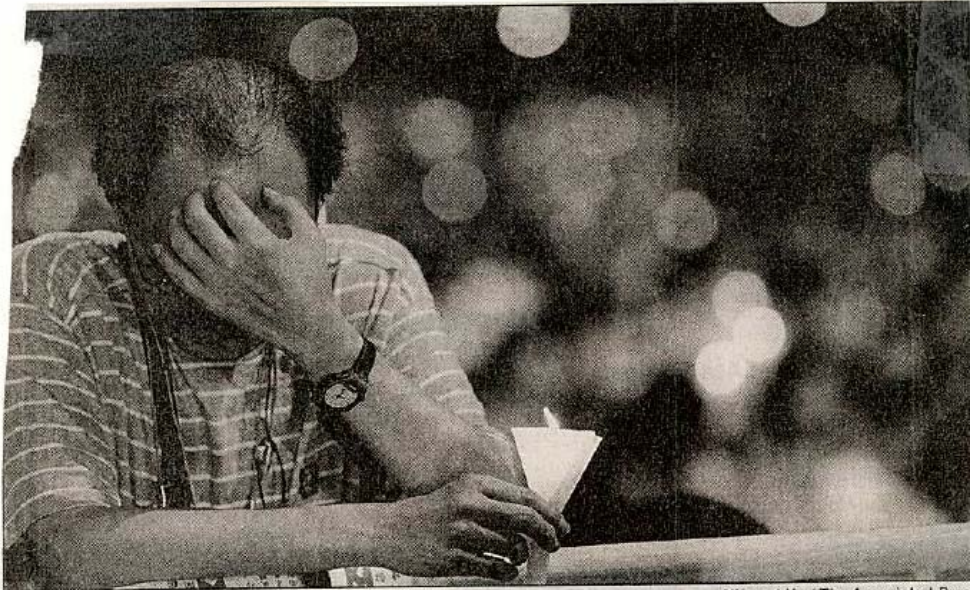


PHOTO #5
Idaho Statesman
2005

China tightens security in effort to block Tiananmen memorials



Vincent Yu / The Associated Press

A man holds his head Saturday during a rally at Hong Kong's Victoria Park as tens of thousands of people attend a candlelight vigil to mark the 16th anniversary of the military crackdown on a pro-democracy student movement in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

Listing of online news sources:

Africa:

Africa News Online

<http://allafrica.com/>

Botswana Gazette

<http://www.gazette.bw/>

Addis Tribune (Ethiopia)

<http://www.addistribune.com/>

Daily Mail (South Africa)

<http://www.mg.co.za/>

Daily Nation (Kenya)

<http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/>

The Monitor (Uganda)

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/Bogota>

The Guardian (Nigeria)

<http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/>

Americas:

Bogota Daily (Colombia)

<http://bogotadaily.com/>

The News (Mexico)

<http://www.thenewsmexico.com/>

Tico Times (Costa Rica)

<http://www.ticotimes.net/index.htm>

Vancouver Sun (Canada)

<http://www.canada.com/cityguides/vancouver/index.html>

Teacher Handout 6

Granma (Cuba)

<http://www.granma.cu/ingles/>

Los Angeles Times (USA)

<http://www.latimes.com/>

Washington Post (USA)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Asia:

Dawn (Pakistan)

<http://www.dawn.com/2006/07/27/index.htm>

Korea Times (South Korea)

<http://times.hankooki.com/>

Japan Times (Japan)

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/>

Times of India

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>

Jakarta Post (Indonesia)

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/headlines.asp>

People's Daily (China)

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/>

Nhan Dan (Vietnam)

<http://www.nhandan.org.vn/>

Europe:

Budapest Sun (Hungary)

<http://www.budapestsun.com/>

Frankfurt Allgemeine (Germany)

<http://www.faz.net/s/homepage.html>

Teacher Handout 6

Moscow Times (Russia)

<http://www.moscowtimes.ru/indexes/01.html>

Norway Post

<http://www.norwaypost.no/>

Irish Independent

http://www.unison.ie/irish_independent/

Prague Post (Czech)

<http://www.praguepost.com/index.php>

The Times (England)

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/global/>

Middle East:

Bethlehem News (Palestine)

<http://www.bethlehempost.com/>

Daily Star (Lebanon)

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/home3.asp>

Jerusalem Post (Israel)

<http://www.jpost.com/>

Tehran Times (Iran)

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/>

Arab News (Saudi Arabia)

<http://www.arabnews.com/>

Turkish Press

<http://www.turkishpress.com/>

Al-Ahram Weekly (Egypt)

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/index.htm>